ENCRYPTION

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SECURITY TRAINING

ENCRYPTION cont.

- Unencrypted email messages can expose private information. Emailed information is more secure if it is encrypted.
- You must encrypt all emails and attachments that contain VA sensitive information.
- You can also use a digital signature to add another level of security to your email messages. Adding a digital signature to an email allows the recipient to verify the authenticity and integrity of the messages you send. messages to addresses outside of VA's network

VHA RULES OF BEHAVIOR

- The ROB requires that you use encryption when sending VA sensitive information through emails,
- Whether it's to Veterans or VA personnel, research collaborators or IRB members. Sending unencrypted emails can result in identity theft and other security breaches if the PII or PHI goes to an unauthorized individual.
- Sensitive information should never be included in the subject line of the email because the subject line is not encrypted when using any type of email encryption solution.

ORGANIZATIONAL USERS ROB POLICY

- Its easy to just “encrypt all” and therefore not worry about having a privacy violation but that goes against the VHA Rules of Behavior:
  - “I will encrypt email, including attachments, which contain VA sensitive information. I will not encrypt email that does not include VA sensitive information or any email excluded from the encryption requirement.”

WHAT NEEDS ENCRYPTION:

III – INDIVIDAULLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

VHA DIRECTIVE 1605 “Individually-identifiable information is any information pertaining to an individual that is retrieved by the individual’s name or other unique identifier, as well as individually identifiable health information regardless of how it is retrieved. Individually-identifiable information is a subset of sensitive personal information or personally identifiable information and is protected by the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a (e)(10)).”

THIS INCLUDES STUDY ID.

WHAT NEEDS ENCRYPTION:

- PII – PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION:

  VHA DIRECTIVE 1605 – “Personally identifiable information is any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as their name, social security number, biometric records, etc. alone, or when combined with other personal or identifying information which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother’s maiden name, etc. Information does not have to be retrieved by any specific individual or unique identifier (i.e., covered by the Privacy Act) to be personally identifiable information.

  NOTE: The term “Personally Identifiable Information” is synonymous and interchangeable with “Sensitive Personal Information”.

WHAT NEEDS ENCRYPTION:

- SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sensitive Personal Information (SPI), with respect to an individual, means any information about the individual maintained by VA, including the following:

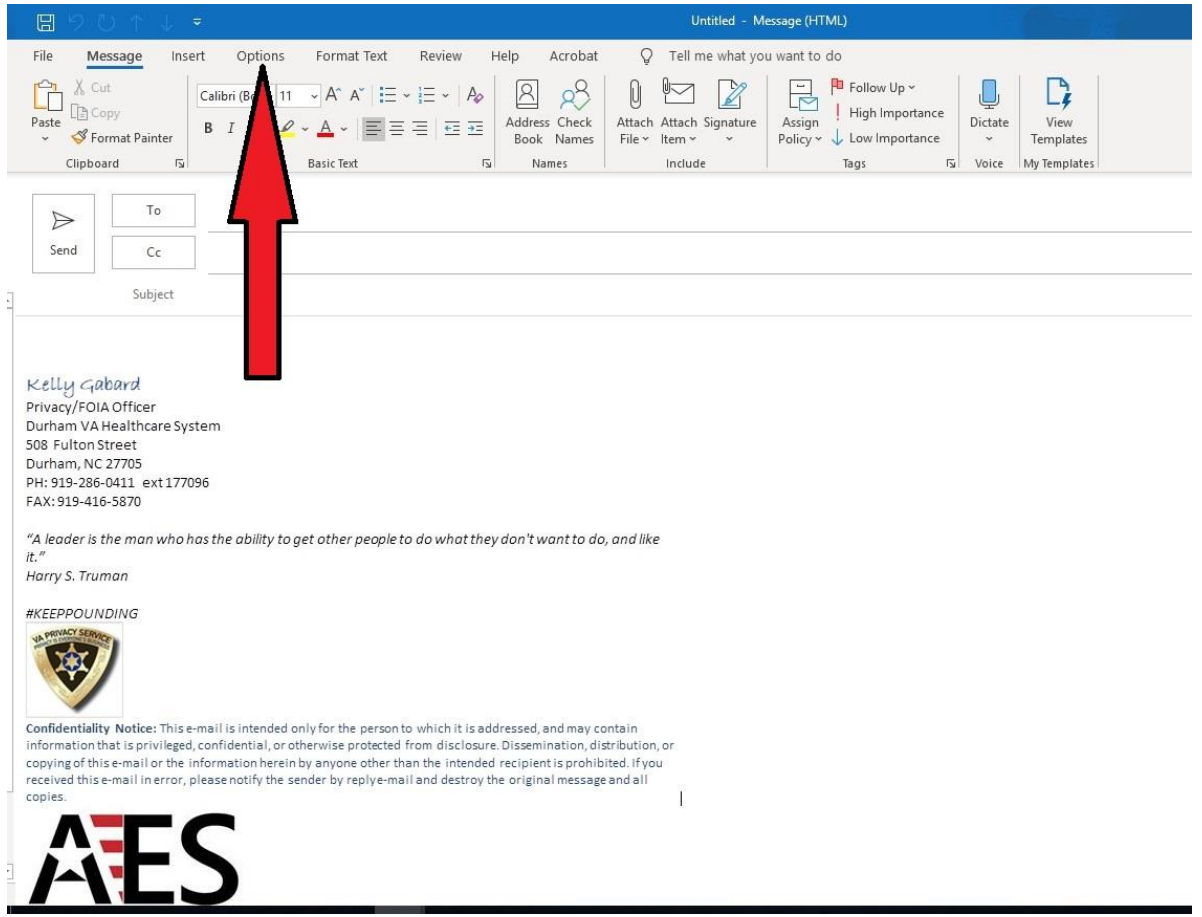
(1) Education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history; and

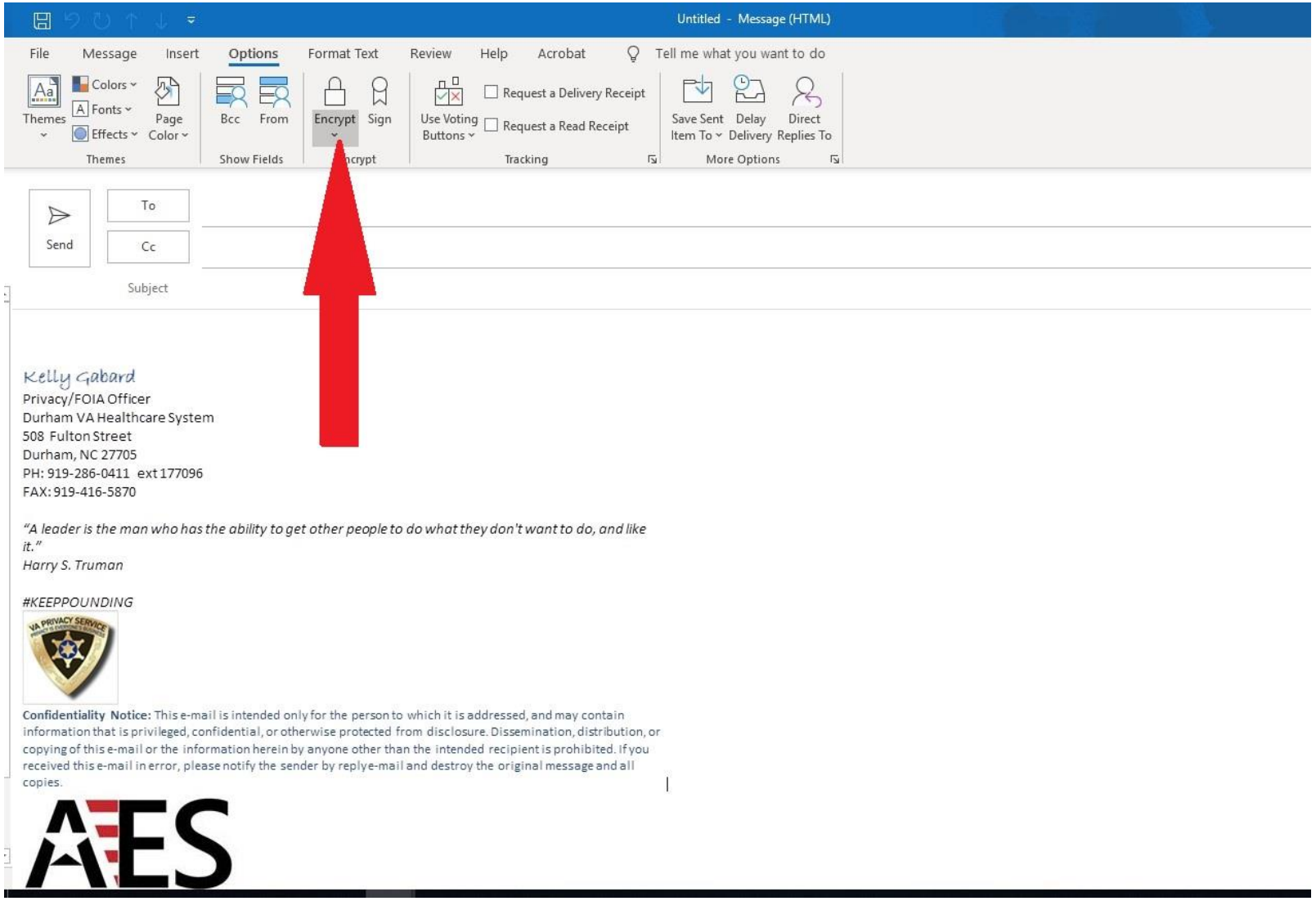
(2) Information that can be used to distinguish or trace the individual's identity,

including name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records.

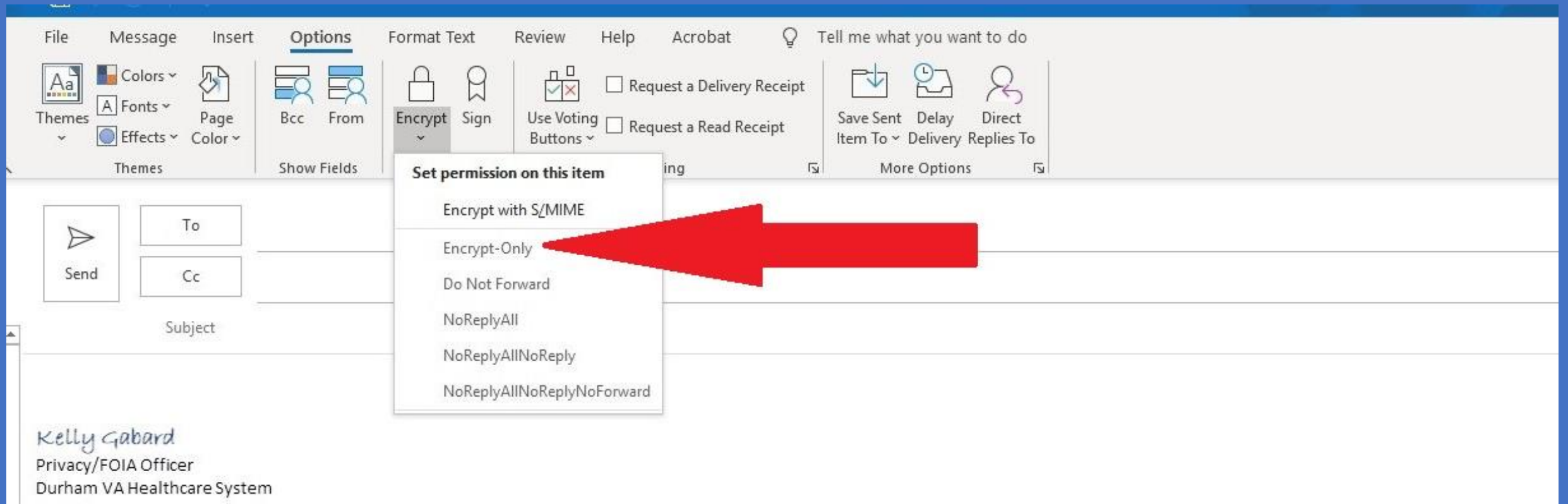
HOW TO ENCRYTP YOU EMAILS

- The first thing you should do when you know you are sending an email that will require encryption is to go ahead and set the encryption before you even start the email.
- GO TO **OPTIONS**





CLICK ON "ENCRYPT"



CLICK ON ENCRYPT ONLY

GUIDELINES FOR ENCRYTION

- Do not include VA sensitive information in the subject line
- Include your name and phone number in encrypted emails
- Confirm all individuals on the distribution list are approved to receive the information
- Consider the audience carefully before using Reply All for an email

CONCLUSION

- Always use Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) encryption guidelines. If you have any issues with encryption, you should contact the Enterprise Service Desk to create a ticket to get the problem fixed.
- You could also use Azure (RMS) encryption to send the documents.